CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1    1. A method of managing a supply chain within a multi-enterprise environment
2    via a computer network, said multi-enterprise environment including a manufacturing
3    enterprise and at least one supply chain entity, comprising:
4        loading a bill of material file into said computer network;
5        processing said bill of material file;
6        generating a bid request from said bill of material file;
7        transmitting said bid request to a web site;
8        receiving at least one bid response by said at least one supply chain entity;
9        analyzing said bid response;
10        generating an award notice;
11        transmitting said award notice to said at least one supply chain entity, based upon
12    results of said analyzing; wherein costs of items provided by said at least one supply
13    chain entity are compared to costs available to said manufacturing enterprise; and
14        tracking selected activities in a log.

1    2. The method of claim 1, wherein said processing said bill of material file
2    includes mapping items contained in said bill of material file from said manufacturing
3    enterprise with items provided by external sources via said network.

1        3. The method of claim 2, wherein said items contained in said bill of material

2      file include:

3             at least one component number;

4             at least one component name;

5             at least one component description;

6             at least one component price; and

7             at least one component availability.

1        4. The method of claim 2, wherein said items provided by said external sources

2      include:

3             at least one component number;

4             at least one component name;

5             at least one component description;

6             at least one component price; and

7             at least one component availability.

1        5. The method of claim 2, wherein said external sources include:

2      a database of said manufacturing enterprise;

3      a data warehouse; and

4      a technical manual.

1        6. The method of claim 1, wherein said processing said bill of material file

2      includes automatically transmitting notifications to an administrative entity of said

3      manufacturing enterprise via said network.

1        7. The method of claim 1, wherein said network is an extranet.

1      8. The method of claim 1, wherein said analyzing said bid response includes

2      comparing data contained in said bill of material file with data contained in said bid

3      response.

1      9. The method of claim 1, wherein said supply chain entity is a contract

2      manufacturer.

1      10. The method of claim 1, wherein said supply chain entity is a supplier.

1      11. A method of managing a supply chain within a multi-enterprise environment

2      via a computer network, said multi-enterprise environment including a manufacturing

3      enterprise and at least one supply chain entity, comprising:

4      loading a bill of material file into said computer network;

5      processing said bill of material file;

6      generating a bid request from said bill of material file;

7      transmitting said bid request to a web site;

8      receiving at least one bid response by said at least one supply chain entity;

9      analyzing said bid response;

10      generating an award notice;

11      transmitting said award notice to said at least one supply chain entity, based upon

12      results of said analyzing; wherein costs of items provided by said at least one supply

13      chain entity are compared to costs available to said manufacturing enterprise; and

14      tracking selected activities in a log;

15      wherein said processing said bill of material file includes associating physical

16      attributes of components listed on said bill of material file with corresponding business

17      attributes of said components.

1        12. The method of claim 11, wherein said processing said bill of material file

2        includes mapping items contained in said bill of material file from said manufacturing

3        enterprise with items provided by external sources via said network.

1        13. The method of claim 12, wherein said items contained in said bill of material

2        file include:

3                at least one component number;

4                at least one component name;

5                at least one component description;

6                at least one component price; and

7                at least one component availability.

1        14. The method of claim 12, wherein said items provided by said external sources

2        include:

3                at least one component number;

4                at least one component name;

5                at least one component description;

6                at least one component price; and

7                at least one component availability.

1        15. The method of claim 12, wherein said external sources include:

2                a database of said manufacturing enterprise;

3                a data warehouse; and

4                a technical manual.

1       16. The method of claim 11, wherein said processing said bill of material file

2       includes automatically transmitting notifications to an administrative entity of said

3       manufacturing enterprise via said network.

1       17. The method of claim 11, wherein said network is an extranet.

1       18. The method of claim 11, wherein said analyzing said bid response includes

2       comparing data contained in said bill of material file with data contained in said bid

3       response.

1       19. The method of claim 11, wherein said supply chain entity is a contract

2       manufacturer.

1       20. The method of claim 11, wherein said supply chain entity is a supplier.

1       21. The method of claim 11, wherein said business attributes include a price

2       masked component.

1       22. The method of claim 11, wherein said business attributes include a

2       consignment component.

1       23. The method of claim 11, wherein said business attributes include a buy off

2       contract.

1       24. The method of claim 11, wherein said business attributes include a direct

2       rebate plan.

1       25.  A system for managing supply chain functions within a multi-enterprise

2    environment, the system comprising:

3         a manufacturing enterprise including:

4         a host system; said host system including a web server, an applications

5    server and a database manager; wherein said web server, said applications server and said

6    database manager are in communication with each other;

7         a security device for determining access to said host system;

8         an A-Source application executable by said applications server;

9         a bridging application in communication with said A-Source application;

10         at least one computer terminal in communication with said web server;

11         a network connecting the web server to said terminal;

12         a data storage device, said data storage device in communication with said

13    host system;

14         a supplier enterprise including:

15         at least one terminal;

16         a network connecting said terminal with said security means, and

17         a local data storage device, said local data storage device in

18    communication with said terminal; and

19         a contract manufacturer enterprise including:

20         at least one terminal;

21         a network connecting said terminal with said security means, and

22         a local data storage device, said local data storage device in

23    communication with said terminal;

24         wherein said manufacturing enterprise system is in communication with

25    said supplier enterprise system and said contract manufacturer system.

1       26.  The system of claim 25, wherein said security device is a firewall.

1   27.  The system of claim 25, wherein said manufacturing enterprise and said
2   supplier enterprise communicate via the Internet.

1   28.  The system of claim 25, wherein said manufacturing enterprise and said
2   supplier enterprise communicate via an extranet.

1   29.  A storage medium with machine-readable computer program code for
2   managing a supply chain within a multi-enterprise environment via a computer network,
3   said multi-enterprise environment including a manufacturing enterprise and at least one
4   supply chain entity, the storage medium including instructions for causing a computer to
5   implement a method, comprising:
6       loading a bill of material file into said computer network;
7       processing said bill of material file;
8       generating a bid request from said bill of material file;
9       transmitting said bid request to a web site;
10      receiving at least one bid response by said at least one supply chain entity;
11      analyzing said bid response;
12      generating an award notice;
13      transmitting said award notice to said at least one supply chain entity, based upon
14  results of said analyzing; wherein costs of items provided by said at least one supply
15  chain entity are compared to costs available to said manufacturing enterprise; and
16      tracking selected activities in a log.

1   30.  The storage medium of claim 29, wherein said processing said bill of material
2   file includes mapping items contained in said bill of material file from said manufacturing
3   enterprise with items provided by external sources via said network.

1       31. The storage medium of claim 30, wherein said items contained in said bill of
2      material file include:
3           at least one component number;
4           at least one component name;
5           at least one component description;
6           at least one component price; and
7           at least one component availability.

1       32. The storage medium of claim 30, wherein said items provided by said
2      external sources include:
3           at least one component number;
4           at least one component name;
5           at least one component description;
6           at least one component price; and
7           at least one component availability.

1       33. The storage medium of claim 30, wherein said external sources include:
2      a database of said manufacturing enterprise;
3      a data warehouse; and
4      a technical manual.

1       34. The storage medium of claim 29, wherein said processing said bill of material
2      file includes automatically transmitting notifications to an administrative entity of said
3      manufacturing enterprise via said network.

1       35. The storage medium of claim 29, wherein said network is an extranet.

1       36. The storage medium of claim 29, wherein said analyzing said bid response

2       includes comparing data contained in said bill of material file with data contained in said

3       bid response.

1       37. The storage medium of claim 29, wherein said supply chain entity is a

2       contract manufacturer.

1       38. The storage medium of claim 29, wherein said supply chain entity is a

2       supplier.

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1      39. A storage medium with machine-readable computer program code for

2    managing a supply chain within a multi-enterprise environment via a computer network,

3    said multi-enterprise environment including a manufacturing enterprise and at least one

4    supply chain entity, the storage medium including instructions for causing a computer to

5    implement a method, comprising:

6        loading a bill of material file into said computer network;

7        processing said bill of material file;

8        generating a bid request from said bill of material file;

9        transmitting said bid request to a web site;

10       receiving at least one bid response by said at least one supply chain entity;

11       analyzing said bid response;

12       generating an award notice;

13       transmitting said award notice to said at least one supply chain entity, based upon

14    results of said analyzing; wherein costs of items provided by said at least one supply

15    chain entity are compared to costs available to said manufacturing enterprise; and

16       tracking selected activities in a log;

17       wherein said processing said bill of material file includes associating physical

18    attributes of components listed on said bill of material file with corresponding business

19    attributes of said components.


1      40. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said processing said bill of material

2    file includes mapping items contained in said bill of material file from said manufacturing

3    enterprise with items provided by external sources via said network.

1      41. The storage medium of claim 40, wherein said items contained in said bill of
2      material file include:
3              at least one component number;
4              at least one component name;
5              at least one component description;
6              at least one component price; and
7              at least one component availability.

1      42. The storage medium of claim 40, wherein said items provided by said
2      external sources include:
3              at least one component number;
4              at least one component name;
5              at least one component description;
6              at least one component price; and
7              at least one component availability.

1      43. The storage medium of claim 40, wherein said external sources include:
2              a database of said manufacturing enterprise;
3              a data warehouse; and
4              a technical manual.

1      44. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said processing said bill of material
2      file includes automatically transmitting notifications to an administrative entity of said
3      manufacturing enterprise via said network.

1      45. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said network is an extranet.

1      46. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said analyzing said bid response

1　includes comparing data contained in said bill of material file with data contained in said

2　bid response.

1　　　47.　The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said supply chain entity is a

2　contract manufacturer.

1　　　48.　The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said supply chain entity is a

2　supplier.

1　　　49.　The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said business attributes include a

2　price masked component.

1　　　50.　The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said business attributes include a

2　consignment component.

1　　　51.　The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said business attributes include a

2　buy off contract.

1　　　52.　The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said business attributes include a

2　direct rebate plan.